

In the Claims:

Claims 1-7, 9-12, and 14-20 are pending in the application with new claims 15-20 added herein are pending in the application.

Claim 1 (previously presented): A prosthetic valve in the form of a flap valve which includes at least one flap arranged to allow movement of liquid through the valve only in one direction, the or each flap being made of a flexible openwork structure of a medically acceptable metal, wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from the group consisting of: knitted wire and chainmail.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 1 wherein said valve includes a single flap arranged to close against a supporting wall mounted upon a peripheral stent.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 1 wherein said valve includes two flaps arranged to close against each other.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 3 wherein said valve also includes a peripheral stent supporting a wall extending at right angles to the plane of the stent and providing two opposed cutouts in which said the flaps are mounted.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 1 wherein said valve includes three flaps of similar size, arranged to close against each other.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 5 wherein said valve also includes a peripheral rib around the perimeter of the valve.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 5 wherein said valve also includes a peripheral stent upon which the three flaps are mounted.

Claim 8 (cancelled).

Claim 9 (previously presented): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 1 wherein the medically acceptable metal is titanium or a titanium alloy.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A method of promoting tissue growth and endothelialisation, minimising the risk of foreign body infection following the fitting of a prosthetic valve in a living subject, said method including the provision of a prosthetic valve in which the or each flap is made of a flexible open work structure of a medically acceptable metal, wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from the group consisting of: knitted wire and chainmail.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the prosthetic valve is a heart valve.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 11 wherein the or each flap of the valve is coated with an inert degradable sealing material when the valve is initially fitted.

Claim 13 (cancelled).

Claim 14 (previously presented): The method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the medically acceptable metal is titanium or a titanium alloy.

Claim 15 (new): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 1 wherein the knitted wire comprises intermeshing loops.

Claim 16 (new): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 15 wherein the knitted wire exhibits a greater flexibility compared to woven wire having a warp wire and a weft wire running at right angles to each other, the warp and weft wires both containing a same material as and exhibiting a same wire diameter as the knitted wire.

Claim 17 (new): The prosthetic valve as claimed in claim 1 wherein the flexible openwork structure is chainmail.

Claim 18 (new): The method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the knitted wire comprises intermeshing loops.

Claim 19 (new): The method as claimed in claim 18 wherein the knitted wire exhibits a greater flexibility compared to woven wire having a warp wire and a weft wire running at right angles to each other, the warp and weft wires both containing a same material as and exhibiting a same wire diameter as the knitted wire.

Claim 20 (new): The method as claimed in claim 10 wherein the flexible openwork structure is chainmail.